

- 1 1. A system for supporting an arbitrary activity involving collaborators,
2 the system comprising:
 - 3 a processor which has access to a representation of a model of the
4 activity, the form of the model being defined by the collaborators and the
5 representation providing access to information relating to the activity; and
6 an interface to the system for the collaborators, the interface being
7 provided by the processor and the interface permitting a collaborator to perceive
8 and modify the model's form and to perceive and modify the information to which
9 the representation of the model provides access.
- 1 2. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein:
2 the representation of the model includes representations of the information.
- 1 3. The system set forth in claim 2 wherein:
2 the interface further permits a collaborator to perceive the model as sorted
3 according to values of the included representations of the information.
- 1 4. The system set forth in claim 1 wherein:
2 the model further includes representations of further information; and
3 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive how the further information is
4 related to the model and to perceive the further information.
- 1 5. The system set forth in claim 4 wherein:
2 the interface further permits the collaborator to modify the further information.
- 1 6. The system set forth in claim 5 wherein:
2 the further information is a document that is accessible to the system.
- 1 7. The system set forth in claim 5 wherein:

2 the further information is a message sent to the collaborator by another
3 collaborator.

1 **8.** The system set forth in claim 5 wherein:

2 the further information is an alert that indicates a change in the model that is
3 relevant to the collaborator.

1 **9.** The system set forth in claim 5 wherein:

2 the further information is a reminder generated by the system for the collaborator.

1 **10.** The system set forth in claim 5 wherein:

2 the further information is a discussion concerning the model among the
3 collaborators.

1 **11.** The system set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the representation of the collaborator-defined model of the activity permits the
3 model to be viewed in a plurality of ways; and

4 the interface permits the model to be viewed according to the plurality of ways.

1 **12.** The system set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the model includes model entities that have relationships one to another;

3 the representation of the model includes representations of the model entities and
4 of their relationships;

5 access to the information is provided via the representations of the model entities;

6 and

7 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive the model entities and the
8 relationships and to modify the relationships.

1 **13.** The system set forth in claim 12 wherein:

2 there is a plurality of types of model entities;

3 a representation of a model entity specifies the represented model entity's type;
4 and
5 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive the type of a model entity.

1 **14.** The system set forth in claim 12 wherein:

2 the relationships includes a first relationship and a second relationship, the
3 second relationship including a model entity that also belongs to the first relationship;
4 and
5 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive the first relationship and/or the
6 second relationship.

1 **15.** The system set forth in claim 12 wherein:

2 a representation of a model entity includes representations of the information.

1 **16.** The system set forth in claim 15 wherein:

2 the interface further permits a collaborator to sort the model entities according to
3 values of the included representations of the information.

1 **17.** The system set forth in claim 15 wherein:

2 the model further includes representations of further information that are related
3 to the representations of the model entities;
4 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive how the related representations
5 of further information are related to the model entities and to access the related
6 representations of information.

1 **18.** The system set forth in claim 17 wherein:

2 the interface further permits the collaborator to modify the further information.

1 **19.** The system set forth in claim 18 wherein:

2 the further information is a document that is accessible to the system.

- 1 **20.** The system set forth in claim 18 wherein:
2 the further information is a message sent to the collaborator by another
3 collaborator.
- 1 **21.** The system set forth in claim 18 wherein:
2 the further information is an alert that indicates a change in the model that is
3 relevant to the collaborator.
- 1 **22.** The system set forth in claim 18 wherein:
2 the further information is a reminder generated by the system for the collaborator.
- 1 **23.** The system set forth in claim 18 wherein:
2 the further information is a discussion concerning the model entity among the
3 collaborators.
- 1 **24.** The system set forth in claim 17 wherein:
2 there is a plurality of types of model entities;
3 a representation of a model entity specifies the represented model entity's type;
4 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive the type of a model entity; and
5 a related representation of further information may be related to a representation
6 of a model entity of any type.
- 1 **25.** The system set forth in claim 12 wherein:
2 the collaborators have different access privileges with regard to particular ones of
3 the model entities; and
4 the interface determines what a collaborator perceives of the model entities
5 according to the collaborator's access privileges.
- 1 **26.** The system set forth in claim 12 wherein:
2 the model includes model entities having a hierarchical relationship.

1 **27.** The system set forth in claim 26 wherein:

2 the hierarchical relationship includes a first hierarchy and a second hierarchy, the
3 second hierarchy including a model entity that also belongs to the first hierarchy; and
4 the interface permits the collaborator to perceive the first hierarchy and/or the
5 second hierarchy.

1 **28.** The system set forth in claim 27 wherein:

2 There is a plurality of the first hierarchies; and
3 the second hierarchy includes model entities from different ones of the first
4 hierarchies.

1 **29.** The system set forth in claim 27 wherein:

2 there is a plurality of the second hierarchies; and
3 the model entity belongs to more than one of the second hierarchies.

1 **30.** A graphical user interface for a system that supports an arbitrary activity involving
2 collaborators, the system including a processor that has access to a representation of a
3 model of the activity, the form of the model being defined by the collaborators and the
4 model including representations of model entities and of relationships of the model
5 entities to one another and the model entities providing access to information relating to
6 the activity and

7 the graphical user interface being provided by the processor and comprising:

8 a first window wherein the model entities and their relationships are displayed and
9 wherefrom a collaborator may select a model entity; and

10 a second window wherein the collaborator may perform an operation on the
11 selected model entity, the second window being displayed simultaneously with the first
12 window.

1 **31.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 30 wherein:

2 the operation is modifying the relationships of the selected model entity.

- 1 **32.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 30 wherein:
2 the operation is accessing the information via the selected model entity.
- 1 **33.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 30 wherein:
2 the relationships include a plurality thereof; and
3 the first window shows the model entities according to the plurality of
4 relationships.
- 1 **34.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 33 wherein:
2 the first window permits the collaborator to select which relationship the first
3 window shows the model according to.
- 1 **35.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 30 wherein:
2 the collaborators have different access privileges with regard to particular ones of
3 the model entities; and
4 what a collaborator perceives of the model entities in the first window is
5 determined by the graphical user interface according to the collaborator's access
6 privileges.
- 1 **36.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 30 further comprising:
2 a third window wherein an interface to third-party software is displayed, the third
3 window being displayed simultaneously with the first window.